

Mr. Ford's Page

THE human race is not a brotherhood as yet. It may become so at some future time, but it is not so now. For one thing, there is no sentiment of brotherhood throughout the world. For another thing, there is a very strong and well-established sentiment of stranger-hood, which education, civilization, contact and understanding have been powerless to diminish.

We so commonly accept as possible facts, the things that we wish to be true, that it was once our habit to say that if the peoples of the world only understood each other, the reign of perfect amity would arrive. But there is no lack of suggestion that, in some cases, the better some of the peoples understand each other, the more they dislike each other.

It is not so very different in individual matters: we accept the majority of people because we do not know them; the majority of those we avoid are the ones whom we know.

If it be true that there are in the world two or more opposite and antagonistic elements which can never be reconciled without doing violence to the very nature of things, then it follows that until the superior element arrives at mastery and the inferior element is disposed of, such a thing as unity is not to be thought of.

Our present times are times of break-up. Many people stand aghast at the opening seams which appear throughout society. There are rifts and fissures where apparently all was cemented into a solid whole. "What does it all mean?" the people cry in their anxiety. It simply means that where we thought there was unity, there was no unity at all—it was all veneer; society has been "kidding" itself into believing that it could ignore the profounder principles and secure a superficial sort of unity by the process of back-slapping and glad-handing and general meaningless chatter about human unity.

A suspicion of this is always with mankind. "Let sleeping dogs lie," is a common proverb, but it does not describe a secure state of things. If security depends upon our keeping certain dogs asleep, then it is not security. For sleeping dogs will wake, and then security will be gone. If dogs awake are dangerous, the only possible security is in taming them so that asleep or awake they may be friendly, else remove them from any possibility of doing harm.

Anyway, no matter what may appeal to us in the form of theory, the fact is present and indisputable, that there is in the world a new consciousness of differences between groups, and that this consciousness is most felt and is most manifested in countries which most profess democracy. It is a popular manifestation, that is, it appears among the people, growing up out of them, not imposed upon them from above or from without.

It must be very clear to anyone who thinks about it that the present situation could not have arisen if the previous situation had been what we supposed it to be. That is, if everything had been as lovely as we supposed it to be, if the "sleeping dogs" were really not dangerous, then what has happened within the last year could not have occurred. There were sores left unhealed, there were differences left unsettled, there were rival claims left undecided. And there never will be peace until the sores are healed and until the differences are settled and until the rival claims are finally and rightly adjudged.

Now, what does this mean, practically? It means this: there will be division and strife until the naturally and eternally superior thing is acknowledged in its superiority.

"The survival of the fittest" is more than a term of science, it is more than a statement reeking with the sense of universal struggle, it is the declaration of the method of history and the objective of destiny—only the fit does survive.

The main difference in human thinking arises with reference to what constitutes the fitness of the fit. One side says that might makes right, and the other side says that right makes might. One side says that the brute will reign, the other side says that the angel will reign. To common sight it looks as if power would win, and money, and influence, and force, and majorities. That is the way flesh-minded men figure it. But faith-minded men see it differently and more truly. They see that there is an essential element of superiority without which money, majorities, force, influence and prestige are failures already. The flesh-minded men are always saying that the swiftest wins the race and the strongest wins the battle. But history is sufficiently long for us to confirm the truthfulness of the faith-minded man's declaration that "the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong."

But we must not be misled by this term "the survival of the fittest" into the delusion that the fit survives by struggle. Not so. If there is a "struggle for life" it is on the part of those elements

which are already passing away; they struggle to retain their place. The superior elements of life do not have to struggle to maintain their place nor to retain their superiority. Not at all; their whole strength is to be what they are; "he that believeth shall not make haste;" struggle belongs to the defeated.

All of which has a side light on tolerance. Some people do not like the word. Nevertheless it stands for a real elemental fact in our civilization. Tolerance is possible only to the superior; the lower elements are always intolerant. The nearer right a man is, the more tolerant he is; his tolerance is in ratio to his immersion in error. Good grows and multiplies of itself and crowds wrong to the corners; it is wrong that struggles and fights; the good does not have to.

What is occurring in the world today is this: under a false notion that vital differences could be patched up by a specious attempt at "good fellowship," the world has gone along for many years trying to pretend that nothing mattered much so long as nothing interfered with our fun or our pursuit of money. It has been mostly pretense, a rosy cloud of words without meaning.

Well, reality has overtaken us again, as it always will. There are strains of blood that will not mix, there are great group ideas and ideals that will never agree, there are great contrary claims that will never be reconciled. We have been pretending that it doesn't matter, but life is teaching us that it does matter; the differences are rolled back upon the

consciousness of humanity once more, to be dealt with more wisely than we dealt with it during the miscalled "era of good feeling," which was only an era of camouflage.

A great deal of mushy sentimentalism has gone by the board. Some people, mistaking the matter, say that it is "idealism" that has disappeared. No, only sentimentalism. Sentimentalism is mushy, and soft, and polite, and likes a nice book in a cozy corner. Idealism is willing to fight, and be unpopular, and rouse nasty language and get its head cracked, if need be, for the honor of an idea.

In the meantime, let every man be true to his own position, if he is honestly convinced it is the true one. And let us give room and liberty for everyone to profess his own loyalty. The world is breaking up into its component parts. Every man must line up with the group to which his inmost soul gives its vote. It is a time of taking sides, and a man must take his own side. Afterward, when once again the position is made clear, we may find a better plan of working and living together in spite of our differences, and yet without denying them.

THERE is not less unity in the world; there is only the discovery that what we called unity was mere pretense. We pretended that certain differences did not matter; we are learning that they do matter. We were trying to bring in brotherhood by putting out loyalty to principle; we have found it would not work. There are deep and irreconcilable differences which will never be healed until the inferior disappears in favor of the superior. Society is now going back to its component groups; men are lining up with their own side; and when we get our various positions clearly defined, we shall be better able to work and live together. But it is not Unity, it is only camouflage that is disappearing now.